(b) The location of the new site as proposed after preliminary survey carried out during XXIII Indian Antarctic Expedition in early 2004 is near latitude 69° South and longitude 76° East. The department is still in the initial stages of survey of the selected site which is required to be assessed for environmental parameters as mandated under the Environmental Protocol of the Antarctic-Treaty, and also for logistics and scientific considerations. So, the estimated cost cannot be worked out at this stage.

(c) The expenditure for the maintenance and upkeep of research stations in antarctica from 1983-84 to 2003-04 is Rs. 75.00 crores and the persent annual expenditure is about Rs. 4.00 crores.

Opening of National Ice Core Laboratory

1529. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa, is all set to open the state-of-the art National Ice Core Laboratory, the first of its kind in South Asia in its campus; and

(b) if so, the opportunities that would be made available to the Indian scientists due to this facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes Sir. The Department, at its National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa is in the process of establishing a National Ice Core Laboratory.

(b) This laboratory will provide state of the art facility for archiving and processing of ice core samples obtained from Antarctica and other places, in specialized cold rooms where temperatures will be maintained at minus Twenty degree Celsius. This laboratory is being equipped with special instruments, such as laser-guided precision band saw machine for cutting ice core samples. Inductively coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer, for conducting ultra-trace elemental studies in ice, water, sediments and rocks. Ion Chromatography, Stable Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometer (IRMS) for carrying out high sensitivity analysis of the staple isotopes of Hydrogen, Oxygen, Carbon and Nitrogen, both in ice and sediments. A sophisticated scanning electron Microscope along with micro-chemical analyzer system is also being installed at this facility.

This facility will be available to scientists to analyse ice cores, lake sediments, rocks samples etc., essential for carrying out research on paleo-climate and past climatic changes. This research in turn will help in testing complex climate models and improving the weather prediction capabilities of the country.

Voting right to migrated Indians

†1530. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give right to vote to the migrated Indians settled in other countries including the Gulf Countries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the names of the countries from where demand has been made by migrated Indians with regard to right to vote?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No. Section 19(b) of the R.P. Act, 1950 provides that only a person who is ordinarily resident in a constituency shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for that constituency. Accordingly, any person who is not ordinarily resident in a constituency is not entitled to be registered in the electoral roll.

(b) There has been a demand from the Gulf region that NRIs should be permitted to exercise their franchise in Indian elections, both for Parliament and for the various State Legislatures.

Prime Minister's meeting with NRIs

1531. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister met NRIs in New York in September, 2004;

(b) if so, the points discussed and ideas emanated; and

(c) the action taken to create a more attractive climate for foreign investment?

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.